United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Under-Secretary-General Hansen visits Rwandan refugee camps in Goma and Bukavu to assess humanitarian situation; UNHCR reports steady increase in number of relief flights, while WFP says food pipeline is solid for next three months.

+ United Nations reports pattern of increased military activity by Bosnian Serb forces in recent days; shelling resumes in Dubrovnik area after two-year lull; Ukrainian aircraft hit by gunfire while approaching Sarajevo airport.

+ Special Representative Akashi condemns continuing human rights violations in Serb-held areas in Bosnia; appeals for immediate and unconditional release of all civilians illegally detained.

+ Secretary-General, in report to Security Council, recommends six-month extension of UNIFIL; says Force contributes to stability in southern Lebanon, despite being prevented from implementing its mandate.

+ Economic and Social Council adopts 15 proposals put forward by Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and 14 decisions recommended by Human Rights Commission.

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Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Peter Hansen was due to arrive in the Rwandan capital Kigali today after assessing the situation in the Zairean towns of Goma and Bukavu, according to a United Nations spokesman. Mr. Hansen, who was accompanied by Special Representative Shahryar Khan and officials from United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, was due to meet tomorrow with representatives of the Rwandan Government.

Meanwhile, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the volume of humanitarian flights into Goma was increasing steadily, while the World Food Programme (WFP) described the food pipeline for refugees as "solid" for the next three months.

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Bosnian Serb forces have engaged in a pattern of increased military activity in the last few days, according to a United Nations spokesman. Thirty-six shells were fired in the Dubrovnik area -- the first such incident in two years -- while shelling of Government positions north of Tuzla was also reported. In addition, an anti-aircraft gun was located in the heavy-weapons exclusion zone around Gorazde, and the Bosnian Serb authorities were warned that action would be taken if the gun were not moved.

Meanwhile, an aircraft landed without incident at Sarajevo airport today, and a second was due to arrive this afternoon, the spokesman said. On Friday, a Ukrainian troop transport was hit by 20 bullets fired from Bosnian Serb positions and one soldier was slightly injured. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) received assurances from the Bosnian Serb authorities that the incident would not be repeated, and was considering a full-scale resumption of flights into the city tomorrow.

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Special Representative Yasushi Akashi has condemned continuing violations of human rights in Serb-held areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a statement issued on Friday, he said the illegal detentions, forced labour and expulsions of Muslim civilians were a flagrant breach of internationally recognized human rights and humanitarian principles. In recent days, 139 Muslim civilians, mostly women and children, had been forcibly moved from the Bijeljina area to the confrontation line near Tuzla. At least 70 Muslim men had been arrested in Bijeljina and were being held illegally, while a further 100 civilians had been detained in Rogatica on 4 July. In addition, there were disturbing reports of human rights violations in the Banja Luka area.

Mr Akashi said it was important at this critical time that all parties adhere to internationally recognized humanitarian principles, especially where they concerned ethnic minorities. He appealed to the Bosnian Serb authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all civilians illegally detained and to stop forcibly moving civilians. Those released should be allowed to return to their homes or to proceed to any other destination of their choice, he added.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the Security Council extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for six months to 31 January 1995. In a report dated 20 July, he said the Force contributed to stability and the safety of the population in the south of the country, which remained tense and volatile. The extension had been requested by the Lebanese Government.

The Secretary-General noted that Israel continued to occupy parts of southern Lebanon -- despite the Council's repeated calls for its withdrawal -- and that UNIFIL continued to be prevented from implementing its mandate. The

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Lebanese Government considered the occupation to be the major obstacle to national recovery, and saw withdrawal as the only way to stop the violence in the south.

Despite a lack of progress in ongoing peace talks, the Secretary-General said he was seriously considering reducing UNIFIL's strength because of a shortfall in assessed contributions. The Force was owed some $254 million, and barely had enough money in its accounts to cover three weeks' expenses. He went on to say that he had initiated a study to determine how UNIFIL could perform essential functions if its strength were to be reduced.

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The Economic and Social Council today adopted 15 proposals put forward by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, several of which concerned the Ninth Conference on the Preventment of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The Conference will begin in Tunisia next April. The Council said it should consider the need to sensitize the media to the results of graphic portrayals of violence, and the effects of sensational news coverage on the fairness of trials. The Conference should also consider a draft code of conduct for combating corruption of public officials, address new forms of organized transnational crime, and consider terrorism as one of the most dangerous forms of crime.

The Council also adopted 14 decisions on the recommendation of the Human Rights Commission. It extended the mandates of the Special Rapporteurs on the human rights situations in the Sudan and Iraq for one year.

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